

**COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES
RELIGION PROGRAM: RELI 4740**

THEORY & METHOD IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Instructor: Shawna Dolansky

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Office hours: 2a61 PA, Thurs. 9:30-11:30 **Office Phone:** 520-2600 ext. 1954 *do not leave messages here*

The academic study of religion is an interdisciplinary endeavour. Interdisciplinarity fosters both complementary and competing frameworks within which to understand religion in terms that range from essentialist and phenomenological to functionalist and reductionist. We will review a variety of classic and contemporary approaches, seeking to understand the theories that inform critical methods in the study of religion. Term papers for the course will outline a particular theoretical perspective and demonstrate its methodological application to a specific case study; works-in-progress will be presented to invited students and faculty at a symposium on the last day of class to simulate a conference presentation experience, and elicit helpful feedback toward completing the term paper.

Textbooks:

Required:

The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion, 2nd edition, ed. J. Hinnells **RC**

Recommended:

The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, ed. R. Orsi **CC

Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark Taylor **CT

**Theory for Religious Studies*, T. K. Beal *available as e-book through library*

**Nine Theories of Religion*, D. L. Pals

A Critical Introduction to the Study of Religion, C. Martin

Interpreting the Sacred, W. Paden

*limited excerpts from these texts are listed as required reading in the syllabus below; these excerpts will be available through CULearn, so buying the book is optional

Recommended Online Resource: <http://rel.as.ua.edu/studyingreligion.html>

Evaluation:

1. Weekly reading responses (3 pages) 7 weeks @ 5% = 35%
2. Active & constructive weekly seminar participation, initiative, and leadership = 15%
3. Theorist presentation (variable dates, see course outline below; sign up on first-come first-served basis) =10%
4. Paper Proposal (outlining theoretical perspective and proposed case study in 1 page) due Oct 15 =5%
5. Annotated Bibliography for Final Paper (due Nov 19; 2-3 pages; minimum 8 references) =5%
5. Presentation of work-in-progress (10 minutes, Dec 3) =10%
6. Final Paper (application of a theoretical perspective to a case study, 20 pages, due Dec 8 by 4pm) =20%

A note on attendance:

The seminar format depends on student preparedness and attendance. More than 2 absences over the course of the semester will result in a grade of F for the course. (Note: leaving after the break, or arriving to class at the break, count as absences from class.)

A few notes on written work:

*Late reflection papers or term papers will not be accepted.

*Late proposals or annotated bibliographies will be assessed a penalty of 1% per day. If they are more than 5 days late they will receive a grade of zero: however if they are not handed in at all, your final paper will not be accepted.

*Please review the note on plagiarism on the "Regulations" page at the end of this course outline.

Schedule:

Sept 3 – Theory & Method

Before class read: B. Lincoln, “Theses on Method” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 8 (1996), 225-227

Sept 10 – On defining “religion”

RC ch 1 Hinnells, “Why Study Religions?”

RC ch 2 Sharpe “The Study of Religion in Historical Perspective”

CT ch 15 Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious”

Sept 17 – On studying religion

RC ch 5 Segal, “Theories of Religion”

RC ch 8 Wiebe, “Religious Studies”

CC ch 1 Schmidt “On Sympathy, Suspicion, and Studying Religion: Historical Reflections on a Doubled Inheritance”

Sept 24 – Religion & Theology

RC ch 6 Ford, “Theology”

CC ch 11 Helmer, “Theology and the Study of Religion: A Relationship”

CC ch 8 Lewis, “On the Role of Normativity in Religious Studies”

Oct 1 – Religion & Philosophy

RC ch 7 Meister, “Philosophy of Religion”

RC ch 12 Allen, “Phenomenology of Religion”

CC ch 4 Orsi, “The Problem of the Holy”

Presentations: Bataille, Marx, Nietzsche, de Saussure

Oct 8 – Religion & the Social Sciences

RC ch 9 Riesebrodt & Konieczny, “Sociology of Religion”

RC ch 10 Hackett, “Anthropology of Religion”

RC ch 11 Merkur, “Psychology of Religion”

Presentations: Freud, Lacan, Zizek

Oct 15 – Comparative Religion

RC ch 13 Paden, “Comparative Religion”

CC ch 3 Taves, “Special Things as Building Blocks of Religions”

CT ch 13 Stoller, “Rationality”

Paper Proposal Due

Oct 22 – Perspectives on Religion

RC ch 15 Knott, “Insider/Outsider Perspectives”

RC ch 16 Carrette, “Post-Structuralism and the Study of Religion”

RC ch 17 King, “Orientalism and the Study of Religions”

Presentations: Barthes, Baudrillard; Derrida; Lyotard; Foucault; Said

Oct 29 - FALL BREAK

Nov 5 – Gender & Sex

RC ch 14 Juschka, “Gender”

CT ch 6 Boyarin, “Gender”

CC ch 16 Griffith “Sexing Religion”

Presentations: Butler, Irigaray, Kristeva, Spivak

Nov 12 - The Study of Religion

“Conclusion” in Daniel Pals, *Nine Theories of Religion*

Other readings TBA

- Come to class with a written definition of “religion” and a paragraph about how to study it

Nov 19 – Studying the Study of Religion

McCutcheon “Words, Words, Words”

Annotated Bibliography for Final Paper due

Nov 26 – Manufacturing Religion

Review Symposium on Manufacturing Religion in *Culture & Religion* May 2000:

L. Martin “Review Symposium”

T. Fitzgerald “Russell T. McCutcheon’s *Manufacturing Religion*”

B. Rennie “Manufacturing McCutcheon: The Failure of Understanding in the Academic Study of Religion”

G. Benavides “What Raw Materials are used in the Manufacture of Religion?”

T. Masuzawa “The Production of ‘Religion’ and the Task of the Scholar: Russell McCutcheon Among the Smiths”;

R. McCutcheon “A Brief Response From a Fortunate Man”

Dec 3 – Symposium of Student Works in Progress

*Paper due electronically Dec 21 by 4pm *no exceptions**

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 7, 2015**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2016**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 6, 2015** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2016** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of a final assignment or take home, in courses without a final examination, must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library